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The Alexander Hamilton National Memorial Association

WASHINGTON, D. C., February 12, 1908.

To all Patriotic and Appreciative Americans:

It is our conviction—and this we believe you will share—that the debt America owes to Alexander Hamilton is immeasurable.

It has been said by a discerning writer that “he, more than any other of our early statesmen, did the thinking of his time.”

By those who have made painstaking and discriminating study of the events of our early history, it is confidently asserted that Hamilton more than any other man was instrumental in creating the government of the United States. Certain it is he conceived and created our entire fiscal system.

Both in war and peace, he was the trusted comrade, counselor and confidant of Washington.

He not only shaped the Constitution but later saved it from ignominious defeat. It was Hamilton also who first suggested the doctrine of its implied powers.

To him is America indebted not only for national unity but for national integrity and security.

“He caught the drowning credit of America by the locks and dragged it into life.”

With what seems to us to have been almost more than mortal vision, he peered into the future and made bountiful provision for all our national needs.

He is acknowledged to have been America's foremost constructive statesman, and as such having wrought mightily for us, merits the undying gratitude of all his countrymen.

Niebuhr characterizes him as “great as the greatest.”

Of him Guizot said:

“Hamilton must be classed among the men who have best known the vital principles and fundamental conditions of government. There is not in the Constitution of the United States an element of order, of force, of duration, which he has not powerfully contributed to introduce into it and cause to predominate.”

And Talleyrand:

"I have known nearly all the marked men of my time, but never one on the whole equal to Hamilton. He divined Europe."

In our own times, Joseph Chamberlain, speaking in Guild Hall, recently declared:

"Of all the remarkable men produced by the revolutionary period the greatest was Alexander Hamilton."

And James Bryce (whom all Americans have learned to love), in his "American Commonwealth," after comparing him favorably with Washington, pays him this exalted tribute:

"Equally apt for war and civil government, with a profundity and aptitude of view rare in practical soldiers and statesmen, he stood in the front rank of a generation never surpassed in history—a generation which includes Burke, Fox, Grattan, Von Humboldt, Wellington, and Napoleon."

At the opening meeting of this Association the same high authority (now the British Ambassador) spoke in highest praise of Hamilton and the project to honor his memory, saying: "Hamilton was a thinker for the world, one of universal history's exceptional and brilliant men. His genius is worked into the very body and tissue of your institutions. I agree with Senator Lodge that his description of Hamilton as the greatest constructive statesman of the nation is not overpraise."

No other American statesman, with the possible exception of Washington, has won such lasting fame throughout the world as he, or deservedly gained such prestige from those qualified to speak.

Probably no man stands higher in American jurisprudence than Chancellor Kent. He said:

"Hamilton did more with his tongue and pen than any other man, not only with reference to the origin and adoption of the Federal Constitution, but also to create and establish public credit; and defend the Government and its measures under the wise and careful administration of Washington."

Likewise Ambrose Spencer, also a profound jurist of the period and a political opponent, eulogizes him as follows:

"Alexander Hamilton was the greatest statesman this country has ever produced. In power of reasoning Hamilton was the equal of Webster, and more than that can be said of no man. In creative power Hamilton was infinitely Webster's

superior, and in this respect was endowed as God endows the most gifted of our race."

Of him Dr. John Lord (in his *Beacon Lights*) says:

"There is one man in the political history of the United States whom Daniel Webster regarded as his intellectual superior—and this was Alexander Hamilton."

No finer tribute was ever paid by one statesman to the genius of another than that of Webster to Hamilton, when he said:

"He smote the rock of the national resources and abundant streams of revenue gushed forth. He touched the dead corpse of public credit and it sprang upon its feet. The fabled birth of Minerva from the brain of Jove was hardly more sudden or more perfect than the financial system of the United States as it burst forth from the conceptions of Alexander Hamilton."

President Daniel C. Gilman pays high homage to Hamilton's spotless integrity as well as transcendent ability, and says:

"Hamilton now stands above reproach among the immortals."

Mr. Justice Harlan of the Supreme Court of the United States says:

"None of the patriotic statesmen of the revolutionary period deserves to be held in more affectionate remembrance by lovers of our free institutions than Hamilton. It might be deemed extravagant to affirm that we owe the adoption of our present Constitution to some one particular person. But it is quite safe to say that that momentous result was due as much to Hamilton as to any single individual in our early history. All admit that in securing the acceptance of the Constitution by the people of the requisite number of states, his services were pre-eminent. * * * My cordial wishes are for the success of the movement to perpetuate, by monument or in some other appropriate way, the memory of the extraordinary man and patriot whose genius for public affairs has rarely been equalled, never excelled, in any country. Visitors from other countries may well be surprised that they do not find at the National Capital a conspicuous monument to Alexander Hamilton. Let us hope that the past neglect of the country will be remedied by the success of the plan on hand."

And Mr. Justice Brewer, of the same august tribunal, says:

"I am heartily in sympathy with the proposition to place a suitable statue of Hamilton in this city. To few men is this

country more indebted than to Alexander Hamilton, who was emphatically one of those, of whom we often hear but seldom see, a constructive statesman. His labors in framing and securing the adoption of the Constitution and in creating that financial system which still obtains in this country and which has given to it unlimited credit throughout the world, entitles him to the gratitude due every patriotic citizen of the United States. I shall be very glad to see accomplished this act of tardy justice."

Likewise the present Secretary of the Treasury, Hon. George Bruce Cortelyou, in a recent tribute to Hamilton:

"If you were asked to designate from among all the men of the colonial and revolutionary period of our history that one who most fully realized the ideas we have in mind when we speak of a constructive statesman, the name of Hamilton would instantly suggest itself as an answer to the inquiry. From the time when, a boy of 18, he was firing the hearts of the colonists by his denunciation of the misrule of the mother country, to the hour when he went to his death at Weehawken, his active mind seems to have been planning measures of the greatest moment for the benefit of the land of his adoption."

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, in an address at the initial meeting of the association said:

"Hamilton was a brilliant soldier who led a charge that carried a redoubt at Yorktown; he was the greatest political writer of his time; he was a great lawyer and a great orator, and, after all these years which have passed, it may be truly said that he was the greatest constructive statesman whom the nation has known.

"It is not creditable to the nation that there should be no statue in Washington to the man who did more than any other to organize the nation, and I hope that I shall live to see the day when the statue shall stand before the Treasury, looking toward the Capitol."

Encomiums need not be multiplied.

Surely such a man has deserved well of his country, and his memory should be perpetuated as long as our country lives among the nations.

What have we done to show our appreciation of the matchless services and sterling worth of this nation-builder?

Among the many monuments and statues erected in the parks and open places of the Nation's Capital to perpetuate the memory of our distinguished and deserving dead, we scan the various pedestals in vain for any sculptured figure of or memorial to Alexander Hamilton. To many this will seem incredible. To all it should seem intolerable.

Washington has been repeatedly and rightfully remembered. The Nation's love for our first President has found expression in at least three heroic figures in marble and bronze in various parts of the city, in addition to the splendid shaft that rises on the banks of the Potomac.

Hamilton, on whom Washington leaned most heavily, both in war and peace—"his chief support, his oracle and guide," has been overlooked.

Remarkable to relate, the American people have permitted over 100 years to elapse since he left us, without taking any steps looking to the erection of a suitable memorial to him at the seat of government.

To us this neglect seems unpardonable.

An organization has therefore been effected, national in its scope, to accomplish this long delayed act of simple justice. A charter has been obtained under the laws of the District of Columbia, and a determined effort will be put forth in every section of the country to raise the funds required for this purpose.

It is believed that one of the best and most appropriate sites in Washington is available and that a magnificent memorial to the man whose memory we cherish, may be secured at a total expenditure of \$100,000. None but the finest of designs, materials, and workmanship will be permitted to enter into the structure.

The project has received the warmest commendation of the President of the United States, who writes:

"I heartily endorse the movement in which you are engaged. It is little short of a scandal that there should be no monument to Alexander Hamilton in Washington. Wishing you all success.

"THEODORE ROOSEVELT."

Strong and sympathetic words have also come from Hon. Whitelaw Reid, our ambassador to England, and many other distinguished men.

By unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees it has been decided to invite patriotic societies to select one member to act

in conjunction with the Association in furtherance of its aims.
The following are named:

Sons of the American Revolution.
Daughters of the American Revolution.
Society of Colonial Wars.
Society of the Cincinnati.
Society of Colonial Dames.
The Military Order of the Loyal Legion.

The Hamilton Clubs of Chicago and Brooklyn have already given their strong approval of the movement and will aid in its consummation.

Every admirer of Alexander Hamilton—which should mean every lover of his country and its institutions—is invited to become a subscriber to the fund and a member of the Association.

The names of the men who constitute the Board of Trustees are a sufficient guarantee to all of the integrity of the undertaking and the fidelity of its management.

Every dollar subscribed will be honestly accounted for, and conscientiously devoted to the object to be attained.

Will you not join the promoters of this project in carrying it to complete and speedy success?

All communications relating to the Association should be addressed to the Secretary, and all checks, drafts, money orders, or payments of money should be made payable to the Treasurer, Hon. Milton E. Ailes, Vice-President of the Riggs National Bank of this city, who will receipt and account for the same.

By order of the Association.

FRANKLIN W. COLLINS,
Secretary.

8 Jackson Place, Washington, D. C.

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